

Volunteer Handbook





WELCOME TO SAVE

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Volunteer Program at SAVE – A Friend to Homeless Animals!

We're thrilled to have you join our team, where volunteers play a crucial role in the day-to-day operations of our shelter. Your decision to dedicate your free time to our organization is a generous and selfless act, and we're proud to count you among our volunteer group. Volunteers at SAVE contribute in many ways, from helping clean the facility to providing enrichment and socialization for the animals, as well as handling tasks like washing bowls and doing laundry. There's an activity suited to many skills and interests.

Your choice to volunteer will significantly impact the lives of the homeless animals that come to SAVE. This handbook contains essential information about our organization and the procedures volunteers must follow to help us fulfill our mission.

Volunteering is an Emotional Experience

Volunteering at our shelter is an incredibly rewarding experience, but it's important to acknowledge that it can also be emotionally challenging at times. While we strive to place every animal in a loving home, some arrive sick or injured, and in certain cases, humane euthanasia may be necessary to ensure the well-being of the animal or the safety of the community. Additionally, you may find that a favorite dog or cat gets adopted before you have a chance to say goodbye, or you might not fully agree with an approved adoptive home. Despite these challenges, the special bonds you form with the animals and the love and care you provide make an immeasurable difference. Helping an animal find their forever home is truly one of the greatest gifts you can give.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for choosing to share your time, energy, and talents with SAVE. We hope that your time with us is as rewarding for you as it is for the animals for which we care. Thank you for all that you do and will do in the future.

Again, welcome to SAVE!

Jack Griffin
Director of Shelter Operations

1. Our History

In 1941, two forward-thinking animal lovers, veterinarian Dr. Cornelia Jaynes (the 3rd female to graduate from Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine) and her friend, Emily Myrick, created the Small Animal Veterinary Endowment (SAVE) to rescue stray cats and dogs, shelter them on Dr. Jaynes' farm, and provide spay/neutering services. Upon her death in 1969, Dr. Jaynes bequeathed her farm located at 900 Herrontown Rd. in Princeton, NJ to SAVE.

In 2006, SAVE merged with Friends of Homeless Animals, an organization founded in 1998 that had purchased property in Skillman for a shelter. The new organization was renamed SAVE, A Friend to Homeless Animals.

We restored the historic James Van Zandt family mansion as required by the purchasing documents courtesy of a generous benefactor, completed a successful capital campaign to raise much-needed community funds to build the Shelter facility and moved to our present location in December 2015.

2. Mission

Founded in 1941, SAVE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit animal shelter dedicated to protecting the health and welfare of companion animals in the greater Princeton area. Through six core programs of Rescue, Shelter, Health and Welfare, Spay/Neuter, Foster and Adoption, SAVE focuses on the rehabilitation and successful placement of treatable and adoptable animals. SAVE endeavors to build, foster, and strengthen the human-animal bond.

The SAVE shelter facility has the capacity to house upwards of 100 animals at a time (approximately 75 cats and 25 dogs). SAVE does not receive funding at the federal, state, or local level. Every dollar contributed to SAVE makes a life-saving and life-changing difference for the homeless animals in our care. The SAVE shelter exceeds no-kill benchmark standards and ensures that adoptable animals facing adversity are given a lifeline, a chance to flourish, and the promise of a better tomorrow.

SAVE provides a safe haven for hundreds of animals every year. We are a private shelter contracted by several municipalities, including Princeton, Lawrence, Hopewell, Cranbury, Montgomery, South Brunswick, South River, East Windsor, West Windsor, Robbinsville, and Plainsboro to serve as the holding facility for stray or lost dogs and cats picked up by animal control.

3. Our Staff Commitment to You

The staff members at SAVE truly appreciate your service and your dedication, and we want to make sure you have a wonderful and enjoyable experience. We strive to:

- Provide you with adequate information, training and assistance so you can be successful in your volunteer position.
- Provide you with guidance and feedback.
- Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
- Treat you as a valued team member.

4. Your Volunteer Commitment

When you serve as a SAVE volunteer, we ask the following of you:

- a. Computer-related
 - Have regular access to the Internet and a private email address. Email is our main form of communication to share information, such as volunteer instructions, opportunities and confirmations.
 - If you do not have computer access, we ask that you find a friend or family member who can help you with your communications.
- b. General
 - Complete all required paperwork.
 - Stay within the parameters of your volunteer position(s) and assignment(s).
 - Volunteers are expected to maintain respect for the organization's decisions, actions, and determinations, even if they may not fully agree, as these are made with the benefit of comprehensive information and a deep commitment to the well-being of the animals and the community.
 - Understand that all content developed by any volunteer as a SAVE volunteer is the property of SAVE. This includes, but is not limited to, all graphics, web images, narratives, research, compilations, instructional texts, text, photos, videos, writings, computer programs, spreadsheets, summaries and recordings. It also includes any royalties, proceeds or other benefits derived from these materials.
 - Grant SAVE rights in all photographic images, video and audio recordings of you made during the course of your assignment.
 - Volunteers who require letters or signatures to verify their service hours must keep a record of all of their hours.

5. Confidentiality and Nondisclosure Policy

You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all SAVE proprietary or privileged information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of your relationship with SAVE. When you become a volunteer, you agree and understand that any breach of this confidentiality clause will cause SAVE immediate and irreparable harm. You agree that SAVE is entitled to injunctive relief or a preliminary injunction if this confidentiality clause is breached. You agree that SAVE does not need to post a bond if SAVE asks a court for a temporary injunction or interlocutory injunctive relief. You may be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

6. Volunteer Location and Hours

SAVE, A Friend to Homeless Animals is located at 1010 Route 601 in Skillman, NJ 08558. Volunteers are invited to assist operations during the following hours:

Day	Start Time	End Time
Sunday	9:30AM	4:00PM
Monday	9:30AM	4:00PM
Tuesday	9:30AM	5:00PM
Wednesday	9:30AM	5:00PM
Thursday	9:30AM	5:00PM
Friday	9:30AM	5:00PM
Saturday	9:30AM	5:00PM

a. Age Requirements

The minimum age to volunteer is 16 years old. Volunteers aged 16 can perform general cleaning duties and work with felines. To participate in canine activities, volunteers must be at least 18 years old. Those under 16 can only engage in the Paws for Reading program.

b. Dress Code

Volunteers are required to wear pants and closed-toe, non-slip shoes when walking dogs. For working with cats, pants or shorts that reach at least fingertip length when your arms are at your sides, along with non-slip shoes, are recommended. Slip-on shoes should be avoided, and flip-flops are not permitted. It's also best to avoid wearing dangling jewelry such as earrings, bracelets, or necklaces. Please ensure your clothing is appropriate for the workplace and the tasks you'll be performing.

c. Scheduling

Volunteers are expected to confirm, in advance, their availability for shifts through the designated SignUp website. If a volunteer is unable to attend a scheduled shift to which they have committed, they must promptly remove themselves from the SignUp list to allow another volunteer to fill the spot.

d. Personal Items

Personal items such as handbags, backpacks and any valuables should be left in your locked car. Jackets may be hung on the rack in the lobby, but please note that this area is open to the public. SAVE is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items.

e. Off-Limit Areas

Certain areas of the shelter are off-limits to volunteers unless specifically authorized to enter. These include medical, animal control intake, dog kennels, and personnel offices.

f. Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any portion of the building. If you must smoke, please do so outside and not near the entrance to the shelter. Please do not litter the property with cigarettes.

7. Transportation

Volunteers are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from SAVE.

8. SAVE Vehicle Usage

Occasionally, a volunteer may be asked to assist with transporting an animal to or from an off-site appointment, transporting incoming or outgoing animals, or assisting at an off-site event. In such cases, volunteers may be asked to drive or ride in a SAVE vehicle. This is decided on a case-by-case basis and requires explicit instructions and permission from SAVE leadership staff. Prior use of a SAVE vehicle does not guarantee future use; each instance must be separately authorized for the specific activity and date. All drivers must have a valid NJ driver's license and proof of insurance.

9. Expenses and Insurance

Cover all your own expenses associated with volunteering for SAVE. In certain instances, an expense may be reimbursed, but you must receive approval in writing (i.e., email) from the Director of Shelter Operations or Executive Director before SAVE will reimburse you for any expense.

Carry your own insurance coverage. SAVE does not carry health, medical, liability, automobile, worker's compensation, or disability insurance coverage for any volunteer.

10. Opportunities

a. Cats

Morning volunteers help clean the cat housing areas, which includes cleaning individual cages, litter boxes, refilling water bowls, and sweeping/mopping the floor. Socializing with the cats is also essential, as it contributes to their physical and behavioral health. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old to interact with cats.

Cat fostering involves caring for one or more of our cats or kittens in your home. Foster parents should be prepared to spend time socializing with their foster pets. If interested, please complete the foster application and speak with the foster coordinator.

c. Dogs

Regular exercise is crucial for dogs. Walking provides each dog at our shelter the opportunity to get outside, play, and socialize. All dog walkers must be at least 18 years old as per our insurance policy. As dogs vary in size and energy levels, they require different skills to handle them safely. Walking dogs off-campus must be approved by SAVE staff. For the safety of all involved, please be sure to walk and not run while out with a dog.

Dog fostering involves caring for one of our dogs in your home. You must complete a foster application and be approved before taking home a foster pet. Not every dog is available for foster, and not every home is suitable for every dog. If interested, please complete a foster application.

d. General Duties, Buildings, and Grounds

Keeping SAVE's facility looking clean and neat for the public is very important. Animal shelters are dynamic environments with many tasks that do not require direct interaction with animals. These tasks include cleaning common areas such as the lobby, community room, and hallways, washing windows, taking out trash, and gardening. All volunteers are also expected to assist with general cleaning and assist with washing dishes and laundry. With multiple meals a day and the regular use of towels and blankets, there is a constant need for washing dishes and laundry.

e. Off-site activities and events

Volunteers are also needed for SAVE community adoption and special events. Responsibilities may include such things as setting up and breaking down tables and tents, staffing information tables, handling registration, accepting donations, handling dogs, and discussing SAVE and our mission with the public. To protect their health and minimize stress, SAVE does not transport cats to events.

SAVE staff will determine which dog(s) are appropriate for event attendance.

Dog handlers are expected to adhere to the following guidance:

- Keep all dogs separated from each other. For instance, SAVE dogs should not interact with other SAVE dogs or privately-owned dogs.
- Monitor the behavior of each dog closely for signs of stress, and promptly remove them from any stressful situations.
- Maintain vigilant observation over the dogs while they interact with people, particularly children.
- Politely and firmly remind parents and children to avoid bringing their faces close to the dog's mouth during interactions.
- Only SAVE staff and designated volunteers should handle the leash and be responsible for controlling the dogs.
- In the event of any injuries, such as falls, cuts, or dog bites, assess the situation and call 911 if necessary for immediate medical assistance.

f. Clerical Assistance, Adoption Events, and Special Event Fundraisers

Volunteers periodically assist with mailings, data entry, phone calls, and other duties.

11. Speaking on Behalf of SAVE

Media Contact and Public Commentary Media relations can be complex. For that reason, we ask that, as a SAVE volunteer, you do not speak for SAVE with the media or at public meetings (e.g., city council meetings) without prior permission. Please send all media inquiries and inquiries related to public commentary directly to the Executive Director. Please note that media inquiries are extremely time-sensitive and should be forwarded as soon as they are received.

12. Disease and Prevention

If a shelter animal shows any of the following symptoms, immediately notify the Director of Shelter Operations. If the Director is not on premises, please report to the Volunteer Coordinator or Manager on duty:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Ocular (eye) discharge
- Nasal discharge
- Sneezing or coughing
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Dehydration
- Abnormal gait or muscle control
- Excessive salivation
- Ingestion of foreign object

Steps we take for disease prevention

- Vaccination
- Proper sanitation
- Isolation of infected animals, whenever possible
- Minimization of overcrowding
- Proper ventilation and fresh air
- Elimination of internal and external parasites

13. Volunteer Performance

Our goal is to make sure all of our volunteers have wonderful, rewarding experiences with SAVE, while providing the best care possible to the animals. If, as a volunteer, you have not acted in SAVE's best interest, it may be necessary to end the volunteer relationship. Shelter management staff may end your volunteer relationship at will.

SAVE has a zero-tolerance policy for any behavior deemed abusive towards animals or physical or verbal harassment or abuse of staff, volunteers, or members of the public. Volunteers may be dismissed for disregarding rules and regulations or for any behavior that is not in the best interest of, or does not professionally represent, SAVE.

We understand that volunteers have the best intentions when volunteering. However, we want to make you aware of the steps taken if: (1) volunteer guidelines are broken, whether intentionally or unintentionally, (2) volunteers do not act in the spirit of the team-based environment we aim to cultivate between staff and volunteers or (3) volunteers act unprofessionally or contrary to the interests of SAVE. The Volunteer Coordinator or Management will discuss the issue with the volunteer verbally or via email, and supplemental training or resources will be offered if necessary or appropriate.

If the volunteer continues to violate rules or guidelines or act unprofessionally, consequences will be enforced. Possible consequences include reassignment to another volunteer position, temporary suspension from volunteering, mandatory training before continuation, or permanent removal from the volunteer program at SAVE.

SAVE and its leadership staff retain the right to immediately dismiss any volunteer for serious offenses or unprofessional behavior, even if the disciplinary procedure above is not completed.

While it is impossible to list every potential misconduct, here are some common-sense infractions that could result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of volunteer status. This policy does not limit our right to discipline or discharge volunteers for any reason permitted by law.

Examples of inappropriate conduct include:

Disrespecting staff, other volunteers, vendors, visitors or customers

- Using inappropriate language or tone.
- Engaging in gossip, bullying, or harassment.

Not Following Instructions or Policies

- Ignoring safety protocols or shelter rules (e.g., improperly handling animals or entering restricted areas).
- Refusing to complete assigned tasks or taking on unapproved responsibilities.
- Failing to clean litter boxes, kennels, or play areas as instructed.

Endangering Animals or People

- Mishandling animals in ways that could cause harm (e.g., rough handling, inappropriate discipline).
- Failing to supervise interactions between animals and the public.

Unreliable Attendance

- Failing to show up for scheduled shifts without notice.

Inappropriate Behavior with Animals

- Taking photos or videos of animals in restricted areas and sharing them without permission.
- Employing punishment-based methods, such as yelling, hitting, or using choke chains, prong collars, or shock collars.
- Ignoring force-free training guidelines established by the shelter.
- Giving animals excessive treats or unapproved human foods, which can lead to health issues.
- Feeding animals inappropriately for their dietary restrictions (e.g., giving a dog with allergies or a cat on a special diet unsuitable food).

Unprofessional Conduct with the Public

- Providing incorrect or unauthorized information about the shelter, its policies, or animals.
- Being rude or dismissive to potential adopters, fosters, donors, or visitors.

Bringing Personal Issues to Work

- Arguing with staff or volunteers during shifts.
- Discussing inappropriate personal matters in front of visitors.

Breaking Confidentiality

- Sharing sensitive information about animals, staff, adopters, fosters or donors without authorization.

Improper Use of Shelter Property

- Misusing or damaging shelter equipment or supplies.
- Using shelter resources for personal activities.

Soliciting or Selling

- Promoting personal businesses or political or religious causes during volunteer shifts.
- Asking for donations for personal purposes.

Substance Possession, Use or Impairment

- Possessing, using, distributing, selling, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while volunteering.

Possession of potentially hazardous or dangerous items

- Such as firearms, weapons, chemicals, etc.

Inappropriate Dress or Hygiene

- Repeatedly wearing clothing that violates the dress code.
- Failing to maintain cleanliness when handling food, animals, or medical supplies.

14. Incidents

Working with animals carries inherent risks, including the possibility of being bitten or scratched. There is also the risk of accidents, such as trips, falls, etc. If any incident occurs, whether on-premise or volunteering off-site, including dog walking in Skillman Park, the volunteer must immediately contact the Shelter Director or Executive Director, as well as the Volunteer Coordinator.

The volunteer will be asked to complete an incident report to document the facts surrounding the event. Failing to inform the staff of a scratch or bite unnecessarily exposes other volunteers, staff, and adopters to potential injury and may be detrimental to the animal in the long run. This could result in dismissal from the volunteer program.

Any medical treatment needed is the volunteer's responsibility. Any suggestion by a staff member or other volunteer regarding the need for treatment or a facility to render treatment should not be construed as advice or an agreement for SAVE to be financially responsible for treatment. Volunteers are responsible for their own decisions regarding treatment.

If at any time you feel uncomfortable working with members of the public, please ask them to wait while you get a staff member who is better equipped to assist. Volunteers are not expected to solve issues or find solutions for the public.

15. Policy Against Harassment

SAVE has a strict policy against all types of harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of harassment based upon an individual's age, race (including traits historically associated with race, which include, but are not limited to, hair texture, hair type, and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists), color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, American flag display, physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws. All forms of harassment of, or by, employees, volunteers, vendors, visitors, customers, and clients are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of a volunteer's service; (2) submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting such individual's service; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's service performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

While it is not possible to identify every act that constitutes or may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome requests for sexual favors;
- Lewd or derogatory comments or jokes;
- Comments regarding sexual behavior or the body of another;
- Sexual innuendo and other vocal activity such as catcalls or whistles;

- Obscene letters, notes, emails, invitations, photographs, cartoons, articles, or other written or pictorial materials of a sexual nature;
- Repeated requests for dates after being informed that interest is unwelcome;
- Retaliating against another for refusing a sexual advance or reporting an incident of possible sexual harassment to the organization or any government agency;
- Offering or providing favors or employment benefits such as promotions, favorable evaluations, favorable assigned; duties or shifts, etc., in exchange for sexual favors; and any unwanted physical touching or assaults, or blocking or impeding movements.

Again, while it is not possible to list all the circumstances that may constitute other forms of harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that may constitute harassment: The use of disparaging or abusive words or phrases, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to the above protected categories, written or graphic material that insults, stereotypes, or shows aversion or hostility towards an individual or group because of one of the above protected categories and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, email, voicemail, social media or; display of symbols, slogans, or items that are associated with hate or intolerance towards any select or protected group.

Reporting Discrimination and Harassment

If you feel that you have witnessed or have been subjected to any form of discrimination or harassment, immediately notify the Executive Director.

SAVE will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment or intimidation of any volunteer who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment or intimidation may result in release from volunteer service.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the volunteer who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings. If, as a result of the investigation, SAVE determines that an employee or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, SAVE will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination of employment, release from volunteer service or possible legal action.

16. In Case of Emergency

In the event of a fire alarm, please exit the building safely through the nearest and safest exit. Do not delay your exit to gather animals. Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers re-enter the building if there is a risk present. Once outside, the most senior staff member present will account for all employees and volunteers.

17. SAVE contact information

Email: Volunteer@savehomelessanimals.org

Phone: 609-309-5214

Your choice to volunteer at SAVE makes a significant difference in the lives of the animals in our care. Thank you so much for caring about the animals and for giving them your time, energy and affection. **Welcome to the SAVE Volunteer Family!**